



J. HANLEY

WINNEBAGO COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

PRESS RELEASE

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State's Attorney J. Hanley

Winnebago County State's Attorney J. Hanley is proud to announce the creation of a "Gun Court" in Winnebago County. Gun Court was developed by the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office in collaboration with the 17th Judicial Circuit Court and the Winnebago County Public Defender's Office.

Starting on May 16th, subject cases involving the unlawful possession of firearms will be identified and assigned to Gun Court. Circuit Judge Joseph G. McGraw will preside over Gun Court.

Cases assigned to Gun Court will proceed consistent with how other criminal felony cases are handled. A defendant maintains all constitutional and statutory rights and the existence and operation of Gun Court will not infringe upon the discretion of the parties or the adversarial nature of the proceedings.

"Recognizing that gun crimes have a significant impact on our community, Gun Court is a necessary and appropriate criminal justice system response," said State's Attorney J. Hanley.

The primary goals of Gun Court will be to hold gun offenders accountable for their crimes, reduce recidivism among those who commit gun crimes, and incentivize law-abiding behavior through thoughtful sentencing alternatives. Consistent practices and continuity of trained and dedicated staff will result in swifter case resolutions and just outcomes.

"Gun Court represents a collaborative and innovative approach to addressing the problems associated with unlawful gun use in our communities," said Circuit Judge Joseph G. McGraw. "Strategies employed will be evidence-based and outcomes will be monitored for effectiveness."

State's Attorney Hanley stated, "Whether it be our response to mental health and substance use issues, human trafficking or domestic violence, Winnebago County's criminal justice system has always been "ahead of the curve" in its response to issues facing our community. Gun Court is no different. We are in the midst of a violent crime spike and illegal firearms are at the heart of such violence. Gun Court alone will not solve this problem, but it is necessary and unique strategy to foster consistency and certainty in prosecuting those who illegally possess guns in our community."



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The State's Attorney's Office is proud to be a part of such a collaborative effort. Thanks to all who aided in the creation of Gun Court, including Hon. John S. Lowry, Chief Judge; Hon. Joseph G. McGraw, Criminal Division Presiding Judge; Nick Zimmerman, Public Defender; Tom Jakeway, Trial Court Administrator; and Debbie Jarvis, Director of Court Services.

Further, special thanks to our counterparts in Monroe County, New York. Gun Court is modeled partially after their program and without their counsel, Gun Court likely would not have come to fruition here in Winnebago County.

Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office
815-319-4700